

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. announced today that he has joined Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) in filing a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regarding former Education Secretary Bill Bennett's recent radio comments linking African-Americans and crime. The complaint alleges that Mr. Bennett's comments are profane, and calls on the FCC to censure Bennett and his show's parent company, Salem Radio Network.

Congressman Jackson said, "Many Americans were outraged last week at former Education Secretary Bill Bennett's claim that aborting all black babies would result in a reduction in crime. Mr. Bennett's comments were outrageous. They were offensive. They were indefensible.

"Let me be clear: I support free speech. However, I do not believe that our public airwaves should be contaminated by speech that incites fear and perpetuates hate. African-Americans are not predisposed to illegal behavior. African-Americans are not inherently criminal. As the author of *Freakonomics*, the book Bennett was discussing at the time of his statement, has said, 'criminality does not come with genes.'

"The Federal Communications Commission can regulate content that is profane. Mr. Bennett's comments were indeed profane, so we have prepared a formal complaint to the FCC, asking that Mr. Bennett and his show's parent network, Salem Radio Network, be sanctioned.

"The FCC has defined profanity as 'including language that denot[es] certain of those personally reviling epithets naturally tending to provoke violent resentment or denoting language so grossly offensive to members of the public who actually hear it as to amount to a nuisance.' Mr. Bennett's comments meet that standard.

"Human history is marred by examples of racist ideology masquerading as science. It has been used to foment fear, incite violence, and justify genocide. We revile such insidious ideas, and must repudiate those who propagate them. We must not allow public resources like our airwaves to be used to spew such repugnant and dangerous rhetoric. As the father of two young children, I do not want them growing up in a society that sees them as monsters or criminals simply because of the color of their skin. I want Jesse and Jessica to be seen as who they truly are - full of promise, full of dreams, and full and equal citizens in every way," Jackson concluded.